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## ABSTRACT

A study examined the relationship between students' linguistic insecurity (writing apprehension) and writing performance. College students in three remedial and two freshman composition classes were administered a test of linguistic insecurity that included pronunciation items and choices of hypercorrect, colloquial, and nonstandard versions of sentences. When the results of this test were compared to students' journal writings and their first graded compositions in the course, the analysis indicated a significant negative correlation between a student's linguistic insecurity and the number of clause types and number of words per t-unit. The insecure students often had strikingly less sophisticated writing in essays for the teacher than in their writing for personal, friendly, and uncritical audiences. The more secure students had less gap between the quality of the two modes of writing than the less secure students. The students' case studies also demonstrated that linguistic insecurity increased the difference between the modes of writing in terms of quality of syntactic structures ("well-formedness"), detail of examples, and general fluency. Linguistically secure students tended to do less editing during composing, saving the editing for a later stage of their writing processes, while linguistically insecure students often self-edited as they composed. (RL)

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## LINGUISTIC INSECURITY AND LINGUISTIC COMPLEXITY

Marcia L. Hurlow

Why do writing students often speak much better than they write, or seem more sophisticated and mature than their written sentence structures suggest? Generally, we know that this results from their lack of familiarity with the writing process and their insecurity about their ability to meet the teacher's expectations. A research project which I have conducted over the past two years has isolated specific phenomena that result from the students' insecurity. These provide the writing teacher both a means of identifying student problems as insecurity and some techniques to help them overcome its effects.

### Review of the Problem

Lev S. Vygotsky points out in Thought and Language that the acquisition and development of writing cannot be expected to proceed in the same way as speech, since even the minimal development of writing requires a higher level of abstraction than speech.<sup>1</sup> When a person talks in informal situations, his ideas are directly symbolized by speech. This is what Vygotsky calls first order symbolism. However, beginning writers' process of communication occurs as second order symbolism. The students' ideas are first edited in sub-speech before being written. The analytical effort required to write this way requires that students give conscious attention to the mental operations employed, unlike their lack of attention when speaking. When they give conscious attention to the effort during the initial process of composing, the result is usually worse rather than improved writing due to the additional effort.

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The student whose writing is second order symbolism may edit his idea in sub-speech in several different ways. He may simplify the thought in order to be safe in the face of teacher evaluation, or he may try to fit the thought into a sentence pattern that the teacher has recently presented or that sounds to him like sophisticated writing. Seldom does the insecure student make a judgement about whether or not a choice made this way is the best structure for conveying the thought. A more secure student is more likely to trust intuition, the native competence with language, for expression of the idea, whether or not the student thinks the sentence contains an "approved" structure.

By presenting external models early in a writing course, whether through grammar lessons, sentence combining or other drills which focus on students' sentence level deficiencies, a teacher creates in the students a feeling of dependency on an outside "expert" and a distrust of their native competency. This distrust or linguistic insecurity manifests itself when students write. They think, formulate the thought in sub-speech, then check that formulation against a model before or while they write. In this way, editing while composing interferes with written language becoming a first-order means of symbolizing ideas.

Because it is a creative and dynamic process, writing cannot be so easily measured and tested as material in a math class might be; this creative aspect of writing is the very quality that makes it difficult to teach. Perhaps this is why teachers have tried instead to substitute generalizations and formulas about language. Unfortunately, these substitutes are inadequate. They cannot replace practice, and understanding the process of writing itself reveals why any substitute would fail. According to Vygotsky, "It is a symbol system, not a topic, and when someone learns a symbol system, he learns how to operate it.

To learn to operate it well, over the whole range of possibilities, takes a long time, because it involves the intricate relations of thought to speech."<sup>2</sup>

And behind the relation of thought and speech lie the intricate relations of culture, history and the many other factors that make the student and his writing situation what they are.

The various substitutions teachers make for writing practice are the causes of much of the linguistic insecurity students feel; according to Britton:

It is possible that much of the advice normally given to children about how to write effectively would, if taken, increase the difficulties. Suppose for instance that a teacher has been to some pains to get the process going by engaging the interest of his pupils in a topic to a point where the ideas are flowing freely. If he then makes precise stylistic demands, grammatical prohibitions and admonitions, and insists, for instance, on the looking up in the dictionary of all the words where the writer is in doubt, he may bring the conscious choosing and the mediated processes of the writer so much into the forefront of his mind that the production of ideas is interrupted to the point where it dries up.<sup>3</sup>

The student is forced to approach writing as second order symbolism as he checks each sentence he composes against grammar rules.

For students in college English courses, the "rules" they learn about writing are less likely to achieve automatic regularity since, according to Labov, "the most consistent and regular linguistic system of the speech community is that of the basic vernacular learned before puberty. The overt social correction

applied in the classroom can never be as regular or farreaching as the unconscious effort of 'change from below' within the system."<sup>4</sup>

Fluent writers, according to James Britton and his colleagues, "relate orthography directly to meaning," and are thus able to "write large numbers of words, or substantial sections of words, as whole units without monitoring themselves by some outside norm." I use "fluency" in this essay to mean the degree to which a student writes at the level of first order symbolism, that he does not edit in sub-speech before writing. Fluent writers are not necessarily polished writers; in fact their prose may be technically less correct than less fluent students at the same level of training. However, when a writer has not stumbled from word to word, the prose flows in natural phrases. It seems less jerky or pieced together, and less often contains mazes (Loban), blurred patterns (Shaughnessy) or other structural errors that occur when less fluent writers lose track of their thoughts part way through their sentences.

With the relative effects of fluency and self-editing in mind, I wondered whether students wrote better sentences in their journals or essays, and if their linguistic insecurity affected the qualitative difference between the two writing modes. These questions directed my experimental study.

#### The Experimental Study

In determining students' linguistic insecurity and its correlation with the syntactic complexity in their first and second order symbolic writing, I used a linguistic insecurity test and a count of t-units and clause types in the students' writing.

The measure of linguistic insecurity was the most difficult to obtain. Direct elicitation, such as, "How do you feel about writing?" and "Do you like

the way you speak?" has two major problems. A person is, first, not always aware of his degree of linguistic insecurity, and secondly, seldom aware of how his linguistic insecurity affects his use of language. Also, I needed the data in quantitative form, so it could be compared empirically with other data from the students and checked by a statistical reliability formula.

My linguistic insecurity test was modelled after those in William Labov's The Social Stratification of English in New York City (1966). Labov matched his informants' reports of their speech with his previously collected data on their actual production, and found that what they reported was their "norm of correctness." Labov concluded that his subjects did not hear the sound which they produced but their norm for that sound.<sup>5</sup> My instrument differs in that, by asking my students to distinguish between what they would say or write in a secure environment and what they would do in a less secure one, I have tried to determine how conscious they are of the difference between their "norm of correctness" and their production in informal speech. Thus, I have elicited their conscious, operative linguistic insecurity. My instrument also differs from Labov's in that, while the oral section (part A) contains almost the same items, with a few changes to adapt to Midland dialect speakers, I also include written samples in part B. The last section, C, a set of four direct elicitation questions, I used with my case study students to gain additional information and to have a further check on the reliability of the first two sections of the test.

My choice of pronunciation and sentence level items on a linguistic insecurity test for students in a writing class deserves some explanation. First, the test is a heuristic for general linguistic insecurity, not a measure of insecurity in specific linguistic tasks. Secondly, speed and ease of administration were important considerations. I wanted a tool that would not take more

than fifteen minutes from a class whose main purpose, after all, is writing. Though a test using longer prose passages would be feasible, several problems appear to be inherent: first, greater demands are placed on reading ability; second, sufficient passages for statistical reliability require much more than fifteen minutes for administration; and third, to control what a student reacts to (unity, organization, topic, word choice, sentence structure, or some extraneous factor) becomes more difficult.

The most influential consideration for using pronunciation and sentence level items arose from the responses to the pilot survey for the study. In the survey, which used the same type of questions as part C, students generally noted both their strengths and weaknesses only on these two levels. Very rarely did students comment on their ability to organize or develop an idea; they mentioned handwriting more frequently than any rhetorical unit larger than the sentence. The same pattern of response resulted from part C of the present test.

The oral and written sections of the linguistic insecurity test differ slightly in their directions to the student. For the first section of the test, I play a tape by a man with little regional dialect whom they have not met. He pronounces a set of words, both in Midland dialect, and in either a "network," a hypercorrect, or a spelling pronunciation; the student checks which he or she would say and which is correct. The items, the students' choices (in International Phonetic Alphabet), and what the difference in the choices represents are:

|            |            |            |                               |
|------------|------------|------------|-------------------------------|
| catch:     | a. kɛtʃ    | b. kætʃ    | (word specific vowel raising) |
| collision: | a. kəliʒən | b. kəlɪʒən | (prepalatal vowel tensing)    |
| tomato:    | a. təmeɪə  | b. təmetə  | (flapping)                    |
| often:     | a. ɔfən    | b. ɔftən   | (spelling pronunciation)      |

|         |          |           |                                                                        |
|---------|----------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| leash:  | a. lɪʃ   | b. liʃ    | (hypercorrection, laxing a tense, prepalatal vowel -- see "collision") |
| garage: | a. gradʒ | b. gəradʒ | (syncope of unstressed vowel)                                          |
| length: | a. lɛnə  | b. lɛŋə   | (assimilation of a nasal to the following consonant)                   |
| new:    | a. nu    | b. nyu    | (diphthongization)                                                     |
| wash:   | a. warʃ  | b. waʃ    | ("r" coloring)                                                         |

Great concern need not be taken for dialectically non-homogeneous groups, however. For instance, my insecure students from the east coast, whose dialects I knew did not include "warsh," accurately marked that they said "wash," but decided "warsh" was correct because they did not say it.

The second section pairs standard with hypercorrect, colloquial or non-standard versions of the sentences: the student checks which he would write to friends and which to the teacher. The difference in the choices represent the following grammatical, stylistic or dialectical items:

1. Accusative versus nominative relative pronoun
  - a. Whom did you say was here?
  - b. Who did you say was here?
2. Genitive gerundive phrase versus accusative gerundive phrase
  - a. Were you surprised at my being here?
  - b. Were you surprised at me being here?
3. Non-parallel constructions versus parallel constructions
  - a. I like to go swimming as well as going skiing.
  - b. I like to go swimming as well as to go skiing.
4. Nominative versus accusative pronoun after a preposition
  - a. The IRS is looking for you and I.
  - b. The IRS is looking for you and me.
5. "Got" versus "have" as the main verb with the sense of "must"
  - a. I've got to see the doctor.
  - b. I have to see the doctor.

6. Past participle versus present participle versus infinitive as a verbal complement
  - a. John's shirt needs ironed.
  - b. John's shirt needs ironing.
  - c. John's shirt needs to be ironed.
7. Accusative gerundive phrase versus genitive gerundive phrase
  - a. I was shocked by him arriving.
  - b. I was shocked by his arriving.
8. Positive "nowadays" versus positive "anymore"
  - a. Politicians are so crooked anymore, I don't know whom to trust.
  - b. Politicians are so crooked nowadays, I don't know whom to trust.
9. Marked relative clause versus unmarked relative clause
  - a. The people whom we met were very cordial.
  - b. The people we met were very cordial.

The test items indicate security if what a student marks that he or she says or writes is also correct or among the correct possibilities. If the student decides that he or she says or writes choice a but that choice b is correct, that would be an instance of an insecure response. However, in the cases in which the student indicates that he writes or says more than one of the choices, for instance a and c, the item is marked as secure even if only one of these choices, for instance c, is also considered correct. In these cases the student is probably recognizing that he can operate linguistically at several different levels of formality, at least one of which could be considered as being "correct."

The linguistic insecurity test was administered before the students' journals or graded essays were returned, during the second week of the quarter, so their answers were unlikely to be affected by my evaluation of their work. They were told before the test that it would not affect their grade or my opinion of their potential to be good writers. Samples of the writing were taken from students' freewriting journals and graded essays. The students were in my three sections of remedial composition and two sections of freshman composition at Ohio State

University during 1978-1979, and in my section of remedial composition and four sections of a colleague's class in freshman composition at Southern Oregon State College, 1979-1980.

The free-writing journals were the pieces of writing closest to a first order symbolic mode that I, a teacher, was able to collect. Students knew from their first day of class that the five pages a week in their journals were to be graded on quantity alone, not on grammar, organization, diction, unity or any other quality of writing. The content of their journals, which frequently included very personal, diary-like material, indicated that the students were usually writing for themselves.

My samples of their writing in which editing in sub-speech was most likely were the first set of graded compositions during the course. The freshman English requirements for their essays were that they have a thesis statement and topic sentences for the body paragraphs, support their ideas with examples and be about three hundred words long. The remedial English requirements were for a paragraph length piece of writing with a topic sentence, explanation, example and conclusion.

I calculated the average length and syntactic complexity of sentences in both the essays and the journals. As a heuristic for establishing the average length of the sentences, I used an analysis of non-compound matrix sentences, or, as the literature on composition by Walter Loban and others refers to them, "t-units." The t-unit, most simply stated, is an independent clause plus its subordinate clauses, if any. For instance, in the sentence, "I'm to go home Saturday, and I hope I don't miss the plane," there are two t-units, the second one beginning with "and." As an indicator of structural complexity of the

t-units in both the journals and the essays, I looked for sixteen types of sentence embeddings. The following are the embeddings, each followed by an example.

#### Complement clauses

1. Indicative (declarative)  
I think that students can write.
2. Subjunctive  
We insist that your paper be legible.
3. Marked infinitive complement  
Greg encouraged them to write every day.
4. Unmarked infinitive  
We watched Mike run through the library.
5. Genitive gerundive  
We were delighted by Don's inviting us to dinner.
6. Accusative gerundive  
The teacher ~~gaw~~ him putting away his books.
7. Interrogative  
I wonder how long it takes to get over jet lag.
8. Exclamatory  
I was astounded at how long it took to think up these sentences.

#### Relative Clauses

9. Restrictive  
The student's who we met were very cordial.
10. Nonrestrictive  
Hubert, who detests elections, will not vote.
11. Amount  
The few people who had read the book understood his joke.
12. Free  
We already knew what was in the news.

#### Other Subordinate Constructions

13. Temporal  
When I woke up this morning, there was dew on the ground.
14. Comparative  
I ate as much as John did.

## 15. Logical

If you want to go to the movie, call me tonight.

## 16. Sentential Noun Phrase

That the students write in class is essential.

For interpreting this data, I compared the results of the analysis of each student's journal and essay to determine the difference in number and types of embedding, if any, between the two writing modes. I next compared the degree of difference between the modes with the student's linguistic insecurity test score. Also, I determined what types of clauses were most common in the writing of students who were above the median in linguistic insecurity and compared these with which clauses were most common in the writing of students who were below the median. From this information I derived part of the description of writing by linguistically insecure composition students. To refine this description, I also counted the number of embeddings which were ill-formed, by standard criteria -- what Loban calls "mazes." An example of such an ill-formed clause would be, "I know the direction in which he was going in." The writer takes advantage of what John Ross calls "Pied Piping," namely, moving the preposition before the relative pronoun, but not omitting the last preposition. I did not consider errors which did not appear to be the result of constructing the clause. The lack of subject-verb agreement in "Sara read that you was coming," for instance, would be as likely to occur in the main clause of the writer's sentence as in a dependent clause.

I was very conservative in interpreting the results of various statistical tests through which I ran my data. Because of this study's relatively high number of subjects, I raised the acceptable significance level from .01 to .001. Also, I was mainly interested in tendencies which held true for the largest proportions of students, so I used the square of coefficients of correlation

to determine the degree variables were related, with  $+.33$  to  $-.50$  as small,  $+.51$  to  $+.70$  as moderate, and  $+.71$  to  $+.80$  as high.

There was a small positive correlation between students' linguistic insecurity and the difference in length between their average t-unit in their essay and in their journal. The higher the student's insecurity, the longer the average t-unit in the essays were as compared to that in the journals. There was a negative correlation between insecurity and the number of types of clauses used. The higher the insecurity, the fewer types are used. The correlation was smaller for the journals than for the essays.

Turning from correlations with linguistic insecurity, the correlations of word counts with clause type counts provided several significant coefficients. The larger the average number of words in a piece of writing, the more types of clauses were used. This was true for the journal and the essay at approximately the same high coefficients ( $0.7275$  and  $0.7465$ , respectively). However, between average length of t-units and number of clause types, the t-units in the journals had a high positive correlation with the number of clause types ( $0.8174$ ). Whereas those in the essays had only a small one ( $0.4927$ ).

Not only correlations but also frequencies show a difference between the journal and the essay. An average (mode) of 361 words was in the essay. The average number of clause types was ten. For the journal, the average number of words was 195, and the average number of clause types was seven. The essay would have to have thirteen clause types to equal the ratio in the journal. This supports the correlations by showing that there is a tendency for the journal to have a larger number of clause types per number of words than the essay.

As these figures demonstrate, my research has shown that, at least for structures like clauses and t-units, there is a significant negative correlation between the number of clause types and number of words per t-unit and a student's linguistic insecurity. I interpreted this to mean that there tended to be fewer of certain characteristics which are generally considered to be common in sophisticated writing when the writer is insecure. Also, the greater a student's linguistic insecurity, the greater the difference in the quantity of these items between his first and second order symbolic writing modes. In other words, the insecure student often has strikingly less sophisticated writing in essays for the teacher than in writing for himself or a friendly, uncritical audience. A more secure student has less gap between the quality of the two modes than a less secure one. As demonstrated in my case studies of both remedial and regular composition students, linguistic insecurity also increases the difference between the modes in quality of syntactic structures ("well-formedness"), detail of examples, and general fluency. These aspects of writing are usually higher in the journals than in the essays, but the essays fall increasingly short in these qualities when the student is more insecure. As the student's confidence builds, these qualities are more evident in his essays.

Another finding of this study is that linguistic security is correlated with fluency, or first order symbolism in writing, for many students. As demonstrated in the case studies, linguistically insecure students often self-edit as they compose in the second order symbolic mode. Linguistically secure students tend to do less editing while they compose, saving editing for a later stage. I found that, by itself, simply telling an insecure student, "Don't edit until you are at least finished with your first draft," was to no avail -- he would continue to do so until he felt confident enough in himself to delay editing,

accepting whatever was written first as good enough for that state in the process.

#### Implications for Teaching and Research

If it is true that writing in the first order symbolic mode is more sophisticated (as defined above), and that linguistic insecurity results in less fluent writing in the second order symbolic mode, what can a writing teacher do who is charged with making her students "error free" at the sentence level?

The present study suggests several answers to the question. The first, most obviously, is to increase students' linguistic security. There are many ways to approach this problem depending on the students themselves. The reactions of case study students to assignments and counseling suggest several possibilities.

One possibility is for the insecure student to do more writing whose main purpose, for the writer, is to put ideas into writing. In the classes that I taught, the students' main opportunity for this kind of writing was their journal. They were told that I would not evaluate journals as I did essays, and my assumption was that they would write to express themselves for themselves. Their journal writing often had characteristics of what has traditionally been considered bad writing (spelling errors, punctuation errors, grammar errors, and slang), but also had very important characteristics of good writing (fluency, embedding, personal engagement) that were sometimes lacking in the essays of the less linguistically secure students. In the journal these students have a chance to have a relatively unthreatening experience with writing, which allows them to use their own language for composing and to experiment with written forms -- sentence structures, organizations, ideas -- that they may avoid in evaluated essays in an effort to be "safe." Often the better characteristics

of the journal writing are later transmitted to the essays.

A quality of the journal seldom exploited by teachers is that it permits students to demonstrate their competence, giving teachers a level of expectation for their essays and direction for their instruction. For instance, if students correctly use parallelism in journal writing but avoid it or use it incorrectly in essays, the teacher will not help them by presenting it in a formal, traditional way, as a new element of writing. A more useful tactic is to praise the parallelism in the journal writing, with a brief note about what created the pleasing effect. In this way, students learn one more thing about their "natural" use of language that is effective and useable in formal writing.

This technique will not work for everyone. Some students, for example, do not easily shift into first order symbolism for any piece of writing done for school credit, whether or not it is evaluated. However, such students may be moved toward it by topics which demand more personal engagement. Finding such a topic for any particular student requires consultation with him about his interests. Some students are also personally engaged by topics that draw on events in their lives to which they had a strong emotional reaction, such as "the most dangerous situation that I have encountered."

Another possibility is to encourage insecure students to do more writing outside of class which might be first order symbolism. The most obvious source for more outside writing in this mode is letters to family and A teacher might also advise a student to keep a diary or a calendar such as Moffett describes.<sup>6</sup>

The effort to minimize linguistic insecurity cannot be limited to just one technique in the course. Linguistic insecurity constitutes the major writing problem for many students, particularly in remedial courses, so the organization of the entire writing class should be designed with the problem in mind. Since sentence level correction creates the greatest fear for most students, the N.C.T.E. directive to begin with larger rhetorical units is a particularly good guide.

Organizing my remedial courses with this principle in mind has been especially beneficial. Throughout the quarter, the students write in their journals, as I have explained above. The formal writing for the class begins with the paragraph. I announce that sentence level errors will not count toward the grade, though I will mark and explain errors that most greatly impede communication. The students usually do not believe I will not count those errors, expecting me to use sentence level criteria for establishing their grade. Once they believe I am more concerned about how they develop their ideas, some important changes occur in their writing. First, the paragraph sentences begin to read more like the journal sentences, becoming more fluent, as I have defined the term above. After most of the students in the class have made this transition (usually about three weeks into the term), they begin writing essays, and I introduce the ideas of audience, voice and clarity, still without discussion of grammar, sentence complexity or variety. In the second six weeks their sentences improve dramatically. As they see their sentences in a larger context, serving specific rhetorical purposes and representing their authors to an audience, they become more polished. As they work to explain more complex relationships among ideas in their essays, their sentences become more structurally complex.

By the seventh or eighth week of the quarter, most of the students' essays represent their native competence plus what they can bring of their trained intuitions and sense of quality they have developed earlier in the term. The errors that remain in their work are generally points where their dialect and standard English differ, along with some punctuation and spelling. These areas in which they still need instruction are surface features of language and writing. Begun late in a course this way, instruction in grammar, spelling and punctuation is less likely to be confused in a student's mind with his other communicative abilities and his security with them. At this point in the quarter I usually divide the class into small groups with the same grammar and mechanical errors, or create individual projects. In either case, the students continue to write. They usually seem receptive to the instruction in grammar and mechanics, and the majority incorporate it into their essays.

The findings of this study could easily be overstated. There is no intention to suggest, for example, that journals contain better writing than essays, thus journals are all a student should be asked to write. Though the journal creates a secure situation in which a student can feel "safe" to use more of his language with which he is competent, it does not demand that he practice the skill he will need to communicate with other audiences, such as providing explicit detail, organizing his ideas in a manner that will be logical and easy to follow, and editing his writing so that it will not contain errors which would distract his audience from the ideas he is presenting. However, it would be useful for a teacher to realize that a student who has few or ill-formed types of clauses, for instance, may need more than constant grammar correction and sentence combining exercises. He may need help in building his linguistic security in order that he be able to draw upon the variety of well-formed clause

types that he already commands in his speech and casual writing.

The key to finding uninhibiting opportunities for the insecure student to write rests in the teacher's creativity and perceptiveness. A teacher must first discover what inhibits the writer and then invent a situation in which the student can write without that inhibitor being a factor until the student can gain more confidence.

There are several directions that a researcher may go from this study, following the areas of interest in composition and linguistics. These have been suggested in the study, but the most important implication for research is in the methodology used: the combination of quantitative research and qualitative studies. There are various restrictions to quantitative research. The first is that this research technique can only consider counts of items. Obviously, not everything can be counted, especially not everything that affects a process like composition. It is very difficult to quantify the quality of even the writing product. One is forced, as I was, to decide upon some index of the quality of writing, and even if one chooses several indices (in this study, length of t-units, number of clauses, and number of clause types), all the factors of writing are not considered. They can't be.

Not only does most empirical research count an index, rather than the actual quality, but the quality of the index is also difficult or complex to count. Walter Loban developed a system of "mazes" for his counts, but a system which would also include whether an idea could have been better expressed as a phrase, an adjective, and adverb, a separate sentence, or even a different type of clause would be very difficult to manage, if indeed there would be any way of determining which would be the best alternative.

Two other problems with quantitative research have been treated in the many books on qualitative research methods, so I will only touch upon them here. First, though quantitative research points out tendencies, it averages out important individual differences to do so. Secondly, though it shows correlations, frequencies, proportions and other valuable statistics, it does not show causes and effects.

Case studies also have limitations. Their greatest problem is that they are not generalizable to a larger population. They only describe particular individuals, who may have characteristics in common with others. Who the researcher chooses for case study subjects, therefore, determines at least partially how valuable the studies will be.

Further, they are also limited by the time the subjects are observed and the number of things observed about them. The length of time allows the researcher to see more or less of a process and to see more or fewer of the causes and effects of the various stages of a process. Too short of an observation might mislead the research.

When the quantitative and case study approaches are used together, several of the limitations of each can be offset by the other. For instance, case studies bring out individual differences hidden in the averages and proportions of the empirical research. Likewise, the quantitative research provides a backdrop of general tendencies which put case studies in context with a larger population.

Also, though causes and effects are still not always clear in case studies, the researcher is able to look at more of the factors affecting the subject. The more factors he can consider and the closer he can work with the subject,

the better he will be able to make an accurate assessment of causes and effects.

The combinations of research techniques are useful only to the degrees to which they view the composition student in a larger context. The more characteristics of the student, his culture, and his environment that is takes into account, the better, since so many factors at this point not thoroughly investigated interact and have an effect on how and why a person writes.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> (M.I.T. Press, 1962), p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> Lev S. Vygotsky, Mind and Society (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 118.

<sup>3</sup> James Britton, Tony Burgess, Nancy Martin, Alex McLeod, Harold Rosen, The Development of Writing Abilities (11-18), (London: Macmillan Education, Ltd., 1975), p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> William Labov, The Study of Nonstandard English (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1970), p. 370.

<sup>5</sup> (Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics), p. 455.

<sup>6</sup> James Moffett and Betty Jane Wagner, Student-Centered Language Arts and Reading, k-13: A Handbook for Teachers, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976), pp. 320-321.